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220627Z Apr 04

UNCLAS HARARE 000683

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

STATE FOR AF/S  
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JFRAZER  
USDOC FOR AMANDA HILLIGAS  
TREASURY FOR OREN WYCHE-SHAW  
PASS USTR FLORIZELLE LISER  
STATE PASS USAID FOR MARJORIE COPSON  
STATE PASS USDOJ/FWS FOR KARL STROHMEYER

E. O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: SENV EAID BTIO EINV ECON PGOV ZI

SUBJECT: CONSERVING CONSERVANCIES IN ZIMBABWE

Ref: Harare 655

1.(SBU) Summary: On 21 APR 2004, Amb. Sullivan discussed land reform and conservancies with GOZ Minister of Environment and Tourism Francis Nhema. Minister Nhema suggested private agreements between current owners and indigenous groups could be allowed as long as indigenous peoples benefited from, and were included as partners in, the operation of the conservancies. End Summary.

2.(SBU) Ambassador Sullivan raised the potential seizure of land from Hammond Ranch of the Save Conservancy and Twin Springs in the Kwekwe district, both owned by American citizens.

3. (SBU) Nhema was aware of negotiations between Save Conservancy and a local indigenous company, Traditions, to run the conservancy as a partnership (ref). He mentioned that he was waiting for Save Conservancy to present a final proposal.

4.(SBU) Nhema was not familiar with the Twin Springs property but stated that at 7000 plus hectares he saw no problem with the owners coming to an agreement with local groups along the lines of Save Conservancy's ongoing negotiations. Nhema said he objected to very small conservancies with only 1000 hectares.

5.(SBU) Nhema emphasized the need for 1) indigenous peoples to benefit from the conservancies, 2) existing owners to partner with local groups to run the conservancies, and 3) a permanent solution which locks in conservation as the sole use for the land.

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6.(SBU) Comment: Although local sources suggest Nhema regularly exploits his official position for commercial gain, he appeared interested in preserving conservancies and wildlife. He stated that some of the conservancies taken over were not properly registered with the GOZ. Both American-owned properties in question are properly registered and possess Zimbabwe Investment Center certificates.

7.(SBU) Biographic Note: Nhema received an MBA from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and worked at the Zimbabwean Embassy in Washington DC as well as the Zimbabwean UN Mission in New York. He would like to visit Chicago because of various movie images he has seen- although he mentioned no current plans for travel.

Sullivan  
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